



Analysis of Reading Difficulties Among Grade II Students at Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design to describe a naturally occurring phenomenon as experienced by the research subjects. The study was conducted from November 14 to 28, 2023, at Grade IIB of SD Inpres 18, Jalan Tuteuruga, Klamalu Sub-district, Mariat District, Sorong Regency, Southwest Papua Province. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, and validated using methodological triangulation. Based on observations and interviews with 10 Grade IIB students and the homeroom teacher (Mrs. YK), this study concludes that 10 out of 25 students were unable to read fluently. The causal factors were identified across two dimensions: (1) internal factors, comprising psychological factors, intelligence-related factors, and interest/motivation factors; and (2) external factors, including family factors, ineffective classroom management, and community environment factors. Teacher strategies employed to address these reading difficulties included: (a) using engaging and effective learning media; (b) providing additional tutoring sessions; (c) establishing a mini reading garden in the classroom; and (d) strengthening collaboration with parents. These findings offer practical implications for early intervention in reading instruction at the elementary

level, particularly in remote regions of Indonesia.

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental competency that every student must develop, as it enables learners to acquire knowledge across diverse subject areas and to access information effectively. According to Widasari (2017), reading is the process of comprehending written or spoken thoughts and ideas within a text, wherein comprehension constitutes the measurable product of reading, distinct from the mere physical act of sitting passively in a classroom. Astutik (2021) further emphasized that reading occupies a central role in education, as virtually every academic discipline requires engagement with written text as a medium for acquiring information and knowledge.

Reading is essential for human intellectual development and personal growth. It is a purposive activity directed toward obtaining information, building knowledge, and acquiring new experiences. Students who lack adequate reading proficiency are likely to encounter compounding difficulties across all academic subjects, as reading comprehension underpins learning in every domain (Vellutino et al., 2018; Snowling, 2020). Reading difficulties experienced by students commonly manifest as inability to recognize letters, halting reading, and persistent spelling errors. Such difficulties must not be treated as minor concerns; rather, they demand immediate and specialized intervention to ensure students can successfully progress through their schooling (Mansyukuri, 2017).

According to Lamb and Arnold (2016), four principal factors contribute to reading difficulties: physiological factors, intelligence factors, interest and motivation factors, and factors related to inadequate educational provision. Students experiencing reading difficulties typically struggle to differentiate

letter shapes and sizes, leading to mispronunciation of words. They frequently add or omit words during reading or attempt to read from the middle or end of a sentence. These students generally display reluctance toward reading activities, and their anxiety escalates when confronted with reading-demanding tasks (Akda & Dafit, 2021; Fauzi, 2018).

Preliminary observations and interviews with the Grade IIB homeroom teacher, Mrs. YK, conducted on September 27, 2023, at SD Inpres 18, Sorong Regency, revealed that a number of students were experiencing reading difficulties. Specifically, 10 students, 3 female and 7 male, were identified as unable to read fluently. The difficulties observed included challenges with spelling, insufficient letter recognition, and halting, word-by-word reading. These findings are corroborated by Hasanah and Lena (2021), who documented similar reading challenges among lower-grade elementary students, and by Hendri (2019), who identified multiple physiological, cognitive, and environmental determinants of reading difficulties in elementary school contexts.

Based on the foregoing background, this study was designed to: (1) analyze the factors that influence reading difficulties among Grade IIB students at SD Inpres 18, Sorong Regency; and (2) describe the teacher's efforts and strategies for addressing those reading difficulties.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design, as the researcher sought to describe naturally occurring phenomena as experienced by the research subjects in their actual context (Moleong, 2019). A descriptive qualitative approach was selected to enable a thorough and contextually grounded analysis of the specific factors contributing to reading difficulties and the teacher's responsive strategies.

Research Site and Timeline

The study was conducted from November 14 to 28, 2023, at Grade IIB SD Inpres 18, Jalan Tuteuruga, Klamalu Sub-district, Mariat District, Sorong Regency, Southwest Papua Province. This school is located in an area classified as disadvantaged, frontier, and outermost (3T), presenting unique contextual challenges to educational provision.

Research Subjects

The research subjects comprised 10 Grade IIB students who were identified as experiencing reading difficulties out of a total class of 25 students and one Grade IIB homeroom teacher (Mrs. YK). The 10 students were selected purposively based on preliminary observation data and teacher referral, ensuring that the selected participants represented the range of reading difficulties documented in the classroom.

Data Collection

Data were collected through three complementary methods: (1) structured and unstructured observation of student reading behaviors during classroom activities over 14 days; (2) semi-structured interviews conducted individually with each of the 10 identified students and the homeroom teacher; and (3) documentary analysis of student academic records and assessment data. These multi-method approaches ensured that a comprehensive and contextualized understanding of reading difficulties was obtained.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (as cited in Sugiyono, 2014), which comprises three iterative components: (a) data reduction, involving the systematic selection and summarization of relevant field data; (b) data display, involving the organization of reduced data into coherent descriptive narratives; and (c) conclusion drawing, involving the synthesis of evidence into research findings and theoretical interpretations.

Data validity was established through methodological triangulation, the corroboration of findings across observation, interview, and documentary sources, to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the qualitative data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Individual Student Reading Difficulties

Observation and interview data were collected from 10 Grade IIB students at SD Inpres 18, Sorong Regency, over the period of November 14–28, 2023. Table 1 presents a summary of the reading difficulties and contributing factors identified for each student.

Table 1. Summary of Individual Student Reading Difficulties at Grade IIB SD Inpres 18, Sorong Regency

No.	Initial	Gender	Age	Reading Difficulties Identified
1	RM	Male	8	Inability to recognize letters accurately; inability to differentiate 'b' and 'p'; difficulty seeing clearly; mispronunciation of words; insufficient parental guidance at home; inability to memorize the alphabet due to perceived complexity.
2	GW	Male	8	Poor memory retention; tendency to add extra words while reading (e.g., 'makan' pronounced as 'makang'); error in letter pronunciation; refusal to read when directed by teacher; absence of learning facilities at home.
3	IS	Female	9	Inability to correctly identify and pronounce vowels and consonants; inability to hear the teacher's instructions clearly; frequent misinterpretation of teacher directives; falling asleep during lessons; insufficient parental attention and guidance.
4	PS	Male	8	Difficulty absorbing information delivered by the teacher, inability to differentiate letters 'n' and 'm,' disregard for punctuation marks, off-task behavior during instruction, gender, age, and frequent tardiness.
5	GD	Female	9	No prior kindergarten experience; difficulty spelling, reads ' <i>jangan</i> ' as 'ja-ng-an'; drowsiness; low motivation for reading; limited social interaction with peers; single-parent home situation affecting reading support.

No.	Initial	Gender	Age	Reading Difficulties Identified
6	MK	Male	8	Visual impairment causing mispronunciation; disregard for punctuation; omission of words; difficulty retaining taught material; infrequent school attendance; lack of reading support at home.
7	AP	Female	8	Difficulty pronouncing double consonants (e.g., 'menggangu'); absence of reading books at home; insufficient parental guidance for reading practice.
8	MM	Female	8	Inability to recognize letters A-Z; difficulty pronouncing syllables; inability to read diphthongs; low reading motivation (interest factor).
9	DS	Female	8	Inability to differentiate letters 'b' and 'p'; halting word formation; mispronunciation of words; letter-by-letter spelling without word blending.
10	AF	Female	8	Inability to identify all letters; halting word formation; inability to focus during reading; random word pronunciation without comprehension.

Source: Observation and interview data, November 14–28, 2023

As summarized in Table 1, all 10 identified students exhibited multiple, overlapping reading difficulties. Common patterns across participants include inability to recognize letters or differentiate visually similar letters (notably 'b'/'p' and 'n'/'m'), halting oral reading and inability to blend syllables into words, and difficulty with vowel and consonant pronunciation. Compounding contextual factors, including visual impairment, insufficient parental support, and lack of reading materials at home, were also documented across multiple cases.

Causal Factors of Reading Difficulties

Based on comprehensive analysis of observation, interview, and documentary data, the factors contributing to reading difficulties among Grade IIB students were systematically categorized into two broad dimensions: internal factors (originating from within the student) and external factors (originating from outside the student). Table 2 presents a structured summary of these factors.

Table 2. Causal Factors of Reading Difficulties Among Grade IIB Students at SD

Inpres 18

Factor Dimension	Sub-Factors	Description
Internal Factors	1. Psychological Factor	Physical ailments, fatigue, drowsiness, and visual impairment impair concentration and sustained reading engagement.
	2. Intelligence Factor	Below-average cognitive processing speed results in difficulty following instructional pace and failure to meet the minimum competency threshold (KKM).
	3. Interest and Motivation Factor	Low intrinsic motivation manifests as passivity, off-task behavior, and avoidance of reading activities.
External Factors	1. Family Factor	Insufficient parental guidance and lack of reading materials at home reduce reinforcement of school-based literacy instruction.
	2. Ineffective Classroom Management	Poorly structured classroom environments reduce student focus and impede concentration during reading activities.
	3. Community Environment Factor	Negative peer influence and distracting residential conditions reduce students' sustained engagement with reading.

Source: Observation and interview data synthesis, 2023

Internal Factors

The psychological factor encompasses physical conditions that impair students' capacity for sustained reading engagement, including illness, chronic fatigue, drowsiness, and visual impairment. Several students (MK, IS, GD) were observed to fall asleep during lessons or struggle to see clearly, which directly disrupted their concentration and letter recognition. Visual processing

difficulties, in particular, have been consistently identified in the literature as a significant contributor to reading errors and avoidance behaviors (Vellutino et al., 2018; Snowling, 2020).

The intelligence factor refers to the role of cognitive processing capacity in reading acquisition. Students with below-average cognitive processing speed struggle to follow the instructional pace and consistently fail to meet the minimum competency threshold (KKM). This pattern was evident across multiple participants, whose reading scores fell below the KKM as documented in teacher assessment records. Fauzi (2018) confirmed that lower cognitive processing speed is a significant predictor of reading difficulties in Indonesian elementary schools, as it slows phonological decoding and word recognition automaticity.

The interest and motivation factor manifests as low intrinsic reading motivation, passive classroom behavior, off-task engagement, and active avoidance of reading tasks. Students such as GD and MM demonstrated particularly pronounced disengagement, refusing to read when directed by the teacher and consistently preferring solitary or off-task activities over reading engagement. Morgan and Fuchs (2016) established a bidirectional relationship between reading skill deficits and declining reading motivation, confirming that low motivation both results from and exacerbates reading difficulties.

External Factors

The family factor represents the most pervasive external contributor to reading difficulties in this study. Multiple students reported the absence of parental guidance for reading at home due to parental work obligations, preoccupation with younger siblings, or limited awareness of the importance of home-based reading practice. The absence of reading materials in the home environment further limits opportunities for reading reinforcement outside school hours. Jailani (2014) emphasized that the parent-child relationship is a decisive determinant of early literacy development, as home-based reading guidance provides critical supplementary practice to school instruction.

Ineffective classroom management disrupts the learning environment for all students, and its negative effects are disproportionately experienced by students already experiencing reading difficulties. Noisy, disordered classroom settings prevent concentration and sustained engagement with reading activities, thereby compounding existing difficulties. Juhaeni et al. (2022) demonstrated that structured classroom management is a prerequisite for effective reading instruction, as it creates the conditions of focus and engagement necessary for phonological and comprehension skill development.

The community environment factor involves the influence of peers, social interactions, and neighborhood conditions on students' reading motivation and academic engagement. Students whose residential environments are characterized by distracting peer dynamics or limited cultural value placed on academic achievement are less likely to prioritize reading development. These findings are consistent with Setiawan and Wahyudin (2022), who identified socio-environmental factors as significant contributors to reading difficulties among upper-grade elementary students in Indonesian contexts.

Teacher Strategies for Addressing Reading Difficulties

Based on interview data with Grade IIB homeroom teacher Mrs. YK, four primary strategies were employed to address student reading difficulties. Table 3 presents a structured overview of these strategies.

Table 3. Teacher Strategies for Addressing Reading Difficulties at Grade IIB SD

Inpres 18

No.	Teacher Strategy	Implementation Description
1	Engaging Learning Media	The teacher employs visually stimulating instructional materials, including picture-based methods and interactive media, to facilitate letter recognition and improve phonological awareness.
2	Additional Sessions	Supplementary instructional time is allocated beyond regular classroom hours for students who require intensive reading support.
3	Mini Reading Garden	A dedicated reading corner equipped with accessible

No.	Teacher Strategy	Implementation Description
4	Parental Collaboration	books and reading materials is established within the classroom to cultivate a literacy-rich environment and encourage independent reading. Regular communication with parents is maintained to extend literacy support into the home environment, enabling consistent reinforcement of reading skills outside school hours.

Source: Interview data with Grade IIB homeroom teacher, November 2023

These strategies align closely with the remedial approaches documented in the literature. Udiyanasari (2019) identified the use of engaging learning media, including picture-based instruction, as a foundational strategy for facilitating letter recognition and phonological awareness development. The establishment of a mini reading garden in the classroom reflects research-supported approaches to creating literacy-rich environments that promote voluntary reading and positive reading attitudes (Kasiyun, 2015, as cited in Isoga et al., 2026).

The provision of additional tutoring sessions directly addresses the limited instructional time available within the standard school day, which is a structural constraint identified as a contributing factor to reading difficulties in this study. Hidayah et al. (2021) demonstrated the effectiveness of supplementary guided reading sessions for students experiencing beginning reading difficulties in Indonesian elementary schools. The strategy of strengthening parental collaboration extends the reach of literacy instruction beyond the classroom, ensuring that students receive consistent reading support in the home environment, a factor identified as critical for reading development by Jailani (2014).

The teacher's multi-faceted approach reflects an understanding that reading difficulties are multifactorial in origin and therefore require differentiated, multi-level intervention. Rabia et al. (2024) underscored the importance of systematic, multi-strategy approaches to reading literacy

development in elementary schools, particularly in underserved regions where structural barriers to reading support are prevalent.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Grade IIB students at SD Inpres 18, Sorong Regency, continue to experience significant reading difficulties, as evidenced by preliminary observations, interview data, and declining daily assessment scores. Ten out of 25 students were identified as unable to read fluently. The causal factors are categorized across two dimensions: internal factors, comprising psychological factors (physical and health-related), intelligence factors, and interest/motivation factors; and external factors, comprising family factors, ineffective classroom management, and community environment factors.
2. The teacher's strategies for addressing reading difficulties among affected students are:
 - a) Using engaging and effective learning media (including picture-based and multi-sensory approaches);
 - b) Providing additional tutoring sessions beyond regular instructional hours;
 - c) Establishing a mini reading garden within the classroom to cultivate a literacy-rich and motivating reading environment; and
 - d) Strengthening collaboration with parents to extend reading support into the home environment.

These findings carry practical implications for educational practice in elementary schools located in disadvantaged, frontier, and outermost (3T) regions of Indonesia. Schools and teachers must prioritize early identification of reading difficulties and deploy evidence-based, multi-level intervention strategies that address both the internal and external dimensions of reading challenges. Future research should investigate the longitudinal effectiveness of structured remedial reading programs and parental involvement initiatives in

improving reading outcomes among early elementary students in similar contexts.

Suggestions

Based on the research findings, the following suggestions are offered:

1. Classroom teachers should prioritize differentiated instruction and targeted support for students experiencing reading difficulties, ensuring that remedial strategies are consistently implemented and monitored.
2. The role of parents and the home environment must be actively engaged; every parent should regularly monitor and support their child's reading development at home.
3. Future researchers may utilize the findings of this study as a comparative reference and theoretical foundation for subsequent investigations into reading difficulties and literacy intervention at the elementary school level.

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Declarations

- Author Contribution : Aprilia Febelina Wafom: Conceptualization, Data Collection, Writing, Original Draft; Supriyati Fatma Rabia: Supervision, Writing, Review & Editing, Validation, and Methodology.
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